VIRGINIA FREAR WILD

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Virginia Frear Wild

(1900 -)

Mrs. Wild's father, the late Walter Francis Frear, was Chief Justice of the Supreme Court (1900-07) and the third governor of the Territory of Hawaii (1907-1913).

Her mother, Mary Emma Dillingham Frear, was the daughter of Benjamin Franklin Dillingham who founded the Oahu Railway and Land Company in 1889 and established the Dillingham Corporation, the developers of Ala Moana Center.

The former Frear family home on Punahou Street is now the location of Arcadia.

In her reminiscences, Mrs. Wild recalls her family background and childhood experiences and tells about some of the interests of her parents. She includes anecdotes about the Knudsen camp on Kauai, horseback riding trips, and the summer activities on the Peninsula at Pearl Harbor.

Lynda Mair, Interviewer

INTERVIEW WITH VIRGINIA FREAR WILD

(MRS. URBAN E. WILD)

At her Manoa home, 2572 Alaula Way, 96822

December 6, 1971

W: Mrs. Virginia F. Wild

M: Lynda Mair, Interviewer

M: For the record, I need initially a few facts, such as something to do with your parents and background and that kind of thing, and then carry on from there in your own words whatever occurs to you that would be of interest.
I had a pen somewhere in all this mess. (long pause while she looks for pen, then recorder is turned off and on again) Okay.

W: My father was Walter Francis Frear. [Governor of Hawaii, 1907-1913.]

M: He wasn't born here.

W: He was born in Grass Valley, California. [October 29, 1863.]

M: And your mother?

W: She was born here. (long pause) And her mother was born here too.

M: Let's see, your father was Frear and your mother, I know. . .

W: She was a Dillingham. Mary Emma Dillingham.

M: Did your parents meet here?

W: My father's father was a minister and he came down [in 1870] and preached at the Fort Street Church, which later became Central Union [Church]. That's how he first knew her. Then he went east to school and I think it was between [Oahu] College and the [Yale University] law [school]

that he came and taught at Punahou School, so he saw her again.

[Walter Francis Frear graduated from Oahu College in 1881 and received his A. B. degree at Yale University in 1885. He was an instructor at Punahou School when it was still known as Oahu College from 1885 to 1888. He taught Greek, mathematics, political science, and history; and was secretary of the board of trustees from 1897 to 1900.

Mary Emma Dillingham was a student at Oahu College from 1881 to 1888 when she graduated. She received her B. A. degree from Wellesley College in 1893.

Mr. Frear received his LL.B. degree from Yale Law School in 1890 and his LL.D. in 1910, the latter being an honorary degree from Yale University.]

M: Oh, I see. So he hadn't actually come here to live.

W: Well, the father was down here and lived for awhile when he was a minister and then he brought the family down. And his sister. . . [Henrietta Frear]

M: About when would that have been?

W: Oh, gosh. His sister went to that school that they're now talking so much about at Lahainaluna on Maui. [Lahainaluna High School, opened in 1831, is the oldest school west of the Rocky Mountains.]

M: Um hm.

W: Ah. . .(long pause) I think they were married--I'll have to look up the records again. She graduated in 1893 from Wellesley. Then it would be four years before that. I suppose the late 1870's or the early 1880's. It would be around in there. I'd have to look it up. I don't know where I'd get it right now. I don't know that I've even written it down. [August 1, 1893]

M: Yeh, these things seldom get written down. I could probably find it, though, at the archives, one way or another.

What was your father's father's name?

W: He was Walter Frear [minister of Fort Street Church, 1870-1881]. And Father was Walter Francis Frear.

M: I see.

W: And they were married August 1st. Their fiftieth wedding anniversary was--you'll have to find that out--1942 or '43. She came right from college, I think, to be married. That was four years of college and then he taught her at Puna-

hou before college. Greek.

M: (laughs) For heaven sakes. So he was a good deal older.

W: Quite. Well, he was about eight years older. [He was born on October 29, 1863.] I have that somewhere. I might have to go to a safe deposit box to find some of these old things. I have records on how old he was when he died [January 22, 1948 at eighty-four]. But I can't tell you those things.

M: Your father was educated in what? I didn't quite get that.

W: He went to Yale. Yale Law School.

M: Law school. So teaching at Punahou was in between.

W: In between.

M: But he had finished law school when he got married.

W: Yes, that's the way I remember it. After college he became a lawyer and from 1890 to 1893 he practiced law in partnership with Lorrin A. Thurston. Then he was a judge [of the First Circuit Court, appointed by Queen Liliuokalani on January 1, 1893] and then he was in the Supreme Court [as an Associate Justice, appointed by President Sanford B. Dole on March 7, 1893 and reappointed on July 4, 1894; and as Chief Justice from June 14, 1900 to August 15, 1907 when he became Governor of Hawaii, 1907-13].

Later there was a law firm called Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx that he started and then he was the president of the Bishop Trust Company after that [from November 9, 1925 until he retired in 1934]. I don't know. I have some old records. I'm going to take a look and see. I have one picture I looked at the other day. (she gets up to look for it and says something about "my little doggy outside," then the recorder is turned off and on again)

After he [Walter F. Frear] left the law firm of Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx, he finally became the president of the Bishop Trust and he died in 1948.

M: And he was governor in there someplace.

W: Yes. Oh, didn't I tell. . . ? Oh, well, he was governor. (Lynda chuckles) Ah, 190- . . . let's see. I think it was 1907. You'll have to look it up. 1907. And it's supposed to be--oh, this is confusing. He wanted to end his governorship at the end of the four years. He didn't want to continue on. Well, here's something about. . . . They

didn't have another one or they didn't get one so they didn't do anything, so he carried over longer than a regular one term. If you want the actual dates on that, maybe I have that someplace. I probably do. [1907-13]

M: I could check that. Were you born, then, when he was governor?

W: Yes. I was born in 1900.

M: I understand your parents' family home was over where Arcadia is now. [1434 Punahou Street, 96822.]

W: Yes.

M: Did they build that before you were born?

W: No, they had an old house; a little old house. And they bought the land and my Grandfather Dillingham bought the house--the place for them--from the Rockwell family. And then their house--the new house--was built in 1908 and that was where I was.

What are your other questions?

M: Well, I think that gives me enough background. Maybe you could just carry on with whatever notes you made and I can ask you questions if I don't understand something.

W: Well, I don't really know what you want so it's difficult to know. . . . Well, I know some of the things that my father was interested in. One of them was the condition of the lepers. There used to be a leper station, a place for those who weren't too badly off or those who had to go to Molokai later and my father used to go down and see them and even shake hands with them. People used to say, "How do you dare do it?" He said, "Well, I just like to shake hands with them." (the next sentence is indistinct)

Well anyway, one funny thing happened that chaulmoogra oil was the thing that came out about the time when he was governor. That was supposed to be one of the wonder cures for helping them. It might not have been the whole cure but at least they thought it was wonderful.

And they were given that. He was, I think, to go over to Molokai and he was going to take it over or something. Anyway, he kept it in the back of his car on an errand to do something and it was stolen. He simply wondered what under the sun happened to that man who stole that chaulmoogra oil. (laughter)

Well, I used to ride horseback a great deal and roads at Waikiki, Kalakaua especially, were packed coral, softer than macadam, so that many of us used to ride horseback.

And if I wanted to go swimming down at the Outrigger [Canoe Club], I took my horse and then tied the horse down there. It was not the kind of horseback riding that you have with lessons, you just rode.

I remember especially on Kauai, when I was visiting with friends over there, they would go way up into the mountains and maybe a tree had fallen down. All right, your horse would jump over some of this. I mean, it was rough riding. And of course more people had homes that had land--grass and whatnot--and so your horse was in the back of your yard and could eat the grass. And then they would eat kiawe beans. The algaroba had beans that were very good for the horses. Actually, some said that they were even more powerful than oats for the horse and of course we had a lot of those, plus the grass in our back yard.

Then horseback riding--my parents had a place--well, you can hardly call it a cottage. It was sort of a cover-all place--a big roof, with one room that was sort of divided and then a little kitchenette. That was before they had any roads up there, at least on the Manoa side. They had a short road going up on the side that--well, the other branch that goes on up to Tantalus and that doesn't go the whole way either. It's just a shortcut. Makiki Heights Road was the road that went up there later but this road was a rough one. (loud sound like that of a power mower)

Anyway, when we decided to make extra rooms, then they had to use heavy full-length curtains to divide them.

M: This is up on Tantalus.

W: On Tantalus. And we carried our food up in saddlebags on horseback. The shower was under the water tank.

M: It was really camping then.

W: Yes, it was camping. Many years later, when the road went all the way around, they built a house. And then during the war they couldn't keep it up so they sold the place.

M: Was this sort of a weekend place?

W: A summer place, anyway. And my father, he even used to work in the summer but he'd come up in the evenings with the water for cooking and so forth. And they'd use what they call a Klondike stove.

M: I don't know what that is.

W: Well, it's what they used in Alaska, I think. You put the wood in one side and the baking is done in the other side and you cook also on top. So that's where some of my sum-

mers were and I liked that better because I could see more of the family, but when he was governor I wouldn't. They were so busy doing other things. But I didn't argue, of course. I didn't have a chance to. (Lynda chuckles)

M: Yeh.

W: Then, of course, we had to catch our water on the roof and and it went into a tank. That was for our water supply.

M: This is up there.

W: Um hm. Then I was thinking of Kauai. When we went over to Kauai, there were no airplanes way back [then], so we'd get on these little inter-island boats. They also had them to Maui too but I remember more on Kauai because I had friends on Kauai and my parents had friends there too, so we went there a lot. And when it was time to disembark, we didn't disembark on the wharf because the boat had to stay outside and these little sort of--they were big row boats--these row boats came out to the boat and the passengers jumped down to the surf. And this was at night that we landed, or early morning, but it was pitch dark and we were told that it was perfectly safe. They'd say, "All right, now you jump and he'll catch you." So you jumped into the dark and a Hawaiian caught you and then you were put into the boat and then over the waves you were rowed to shore. That was before the harbors were built and they did very much the same thing over on Maui and I suppose, too, on Hawaii. But I had that experience a number of times. They always caught you and you were always okay. (laughter)

M: You couldn't actually see them when you jumped.

W: Oh, no. Well, your eyes weren't ready for it. I suppose it takes quite a long while for your eyes to adjust.

Then another time, around 1911, my mother was invited or asked to come up to Kauai. This Mr. Knudsen--Eric Knudsen--had a wonderful camp up there on Kauai and he wanted both boys and girls--young boys and girls--I think more in their teens. I don't know. Anyway, so we slept in tents and it was by a huge, big stream--beautiful, cold stream--and he'd rigged up various things so that water could come down to take showers in.

And then where we ate there were these big boards used as a roof which made a shelter and that's where we ate. And then we'd go on various trips all through Kauai. And I remember that his wife, I think it was--of course the Knudsen family had a very big house quite a ways from there and a friend of mine wondered where the Knudsens

lived over there and just wanted to visit and go from the camp to the house. And she told us, "Now you must be very careful and watch out. Look for a tree the next time you start to walk because there are wild boars and you may have to get into a tree." So that was just a bit of how rough camp was but it was fun.

[Because of a loud noise in the background, this is an approximate transcription and not verbatim, as some of the words are lost in the noise. Also, it has been necessary to slow down the speech maximally in order to understand what is being said, due probably to a weak battery in the recorder at the time of the interview.]

And I remember one time we took a long trip through rough country but it's a marvelous sight when you get there. So we went by horseback and when we got there, it's that famous spot on Kauai where you look way down and you can see the other side. Now they have a wonderful road there. And I can't remember the name of it but it was pointed out as the place to go to look at. [Puukapele is the chief lookout spot at Waimea Canyon, being 3,657 feet high.] But we went through rough country to get there.

And another time we took a long trip and we came out at the Kauai valley, the valley sometimes called. . . (long pause and recorder is turned off and on again) a ridge in the canyon on horseback and it was very, very steep. Goes straight down to the bottom and you see these Hawaiians living in the old style. They had grass huts and everything. So it was so steep and the side so sheer that we had to lie down flat. Here we were sitting in the saddle and still lying down on our horses, hoping we wouldn't slide off. And then coming back was the same idea. We had to lean way forward but we almost lost one horse coming back because it was so narrow and very hard on the horses coming up. (noise subsides and then ceases)

Well, I know they bawled Mr. Knudsen out for even trying to let us go on a trip like that but it was fascinating. We all had a grand time.

M: How old were the children? Were they teenagers or younger?

W: Yeh, they would be teenagers. I think they still have that camp, still call it the same name, but it's a little different now. It was Camp Kọke'e and we ate goat meat.

M: And he started this himself?

W: Yeh.

M: This was a sort of project then.

W: To have something on the island for them.

M: So did kids come from Oahu as well as Kauai and go there?

W: Mostly. I think, as far as I remember, they were mostly--the ones that I knew there and remember were from Oahu. Mostly Oahu children, giving them a chance to broaden. There might have been some Kauai ones too, but to give some of the other islands a chance to get out and see the valley. And then it was much colder up there. I don't know if you've ever been there.

M: Yes.

W: Have you?

M: Um hm.

W: And. . .um. . .ohh. . .(long pause and recorder is then turned off and on again) They used to, before they had [Aloha] United [Way] fund to get money for welfare, it was done very differently. Most of the women--it seemed to me a great many women--went around themselves. Oahu was divided up into certain areas and they were asked to go personally to all these different places.

And now where there's the canal and a very small part of the Ala Wai Road and part of the area this side of the canal were duck ponds and other kind of ponds where they had little walkways that were piled up with dried mud and so forth and you'd walk across those to go to these little places where people had little houses or little huts and things. And they'd ask you to go around and ask for money and that was one of the things we used to do in the olden days.

Then I remember another time we'd go way up into some of the valleys. Now, of course, they wouldn't allow the children to go way up into the valleys, I think, that way but anyway, we would go. Well, we were older then. So we had to go way up into the valleys where there were many pig farms. Oh, did they smell. (Lynda chuckles) And 'course there was a great deal of eating of pig in those days too. And anyway, we'd go up and it seemed sort of funny to us but we'd do what they asked us to. We'd go and say that we were asking for money for people who didn't have anything and would you like to give something and it was amazing how some of these old people on the pig farms would even give five cents. You know, say, "Here, I'll give you five cents." I mean, a completely different idea than what it is today, when the companies are told, "You have to give this much from the company. You have to give this much. You have to give this much." Well, in the olden days, of course, it was, "We need this, will you help?" More that idea. And of course, Honolulu is so

completely different from what it used to be.

And I can remember my father saying, "Well, Honolulu is so different. They'll never have apartments here. (Lynda chuckles) Not that kind of life here in the Hawaiian Islands." Well, look at it.

M: Yeh. That's interesting that the children helped collect the money.

W: Well, they were a little older than just tiny children. I think more teenagers. And, well, I don't know.

Oh yes, and another thing. Well, we'll say that we had Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's. Maybe somebody heard somebody had a birthday and the Hawaiians would come around and serenade you. We'd sometimes give them something but they didn't always expect it. They'd just come and sing and sing and sing and then we'd sometimes sing with them. But so often, way back, there'd be rarely a time--at least in the area where I lived--that there wasn't some group that would come around and sing. They'd go from house to house and sing for a little while.

I can even remember on Punahou Street--I must have been awfully tiny--when there was a, well, you called it a streetcar then but it was certainly not like a streetcar now. It was pulled by a horse.

M: Yeh, lots of people have told me about that.

W: Ah, yes, they have. Then I remember another time at the corner of Wilder Avenue and Punahou [Street] a lamplighter would come and he had a chain or something. I don't remember. I think he had some sort of a ladder or something he stood on and he pulled down this thing from way up above and he'd light it. That would be the night light.

M: Hmm, with a gas flame or what?

W: I don't know whether it was kerosene or gas or what but it was filled with something then he had to light it.

M: Hm. That would burn all night.

W: Guess so.

M: Well, did you live all your childhood in that house on Punahou [Street]?

W: Except Tantalus.

M: Um hm. You went to Punahou [School]?

W: I went to Punahou. One year I went to a little Nuuanu School. A school in Nuuanu where some of the Nuuanu children went. A Miss Lucas ran the school and I rode my horse over there and home again. And I can remember a few of them--there were one or two--that didn't have a horse from my area that went over there too and they'd go by streetcar and I'd say, "Oh, Mother, I wish sometime I could go in a streetcar, not always ride the horse." In other words, I liked to ride the horse but it was quite something to ride in the streetcar. (Lynda chuckles) But nowadays, of course, it would be very different. (long pause) That was just that one year.

And then I took a trip once with my Mother east and we stayed in Newtown, Massachusetts for a school year and I went to school there, but that was sort of an in between thing.

[According to the Punahou School Directory, Virginia Frear did not attend Punahou School from 1910 to 1912.]

And then I had visits up to the Coast. My people came, on my mother's side, from Massachusetts; and my father's side, a lot of them were in California, so I'd go to see the California relatives at times. Two different summers I was on the farm that one of my aunts had in California.

M: Did you travel around on Oahu very much? Or did people do that then?

W: Well, Waimanalo was very difficult to get to. You didn't have the road going to Waimanalo on this side [Koko Head route]. And they called it the King's Road. [Actually the King's Highway.] You look very carefully and you'll see to the side of the paved road something that looks like stones have been pounded down and that's where the king and his menage used to go around to the other side. But Waimanalo was a plantation. Had a great big plantation there and they brought the sugar after it had been harvested and so forth by a boat around Koko Head to town because they couldn't take it over the hills.

[The King's Highway "is an ancient paved road running inland about 1,200 feet from the Makapuu lighthouse. It then descends through Kealakipapa valley down through the Waimanalo gap to Waimanalo village. This remarkable example of ancient roadwork has been allowed to fall into ruin." Thrum's Almanac, 1968. Waimanalo was the estate of John M. Cummins and his boat, the Waimanalo, transported sugar from there to Honolulu.]

M: You couldn't go around the coast this way then at all.

W: By boat but they didn't have a road then and there was no

railroad at that time. Maybe you could track it over the old King's Road, I don't know. (someone has arrived so she gets up and goes to the door) Is he right there now? I don't know what all he needs.

END OF SIDE 1/1ST TAPE

M: I wanted to ask you, what did you do after you finished Punahou? How did you meet your husband and something about him.

W: (loud noise as before) Well, I had all my years in Punahou. I had up to [1917]. I took two years boarding school.

M: Where was that?

W: Summit, New Jersey. Kent Place. I was going to go to Wellesley but I had the 1918 flu, which hit me very, very badly and I was sick. I could not have another winter right away so I could not go to Wellesley [College]. That's according to the doctors. So then all the plans had to be changed and I went to Mills College.
My husband came down to go into Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx.

M: Had he known you or your family before?

W: No, he was from Harvard Graduate School and he and another friend, a Mr. Brown, were very great friends and this man at Harvard said, "Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx has asked for one man and we think it would be very fine if you'd go." And my husband said, "Well," that he and Bobby Brown had thought, well, that they would try and go together somewhere and go to a bigger place and they'd think it over. But then they, I think the next day they--oh. The dean said, "Well, you think about it and let me know tomorrow." And so finally my husband said, "You know, that would be a bad way to start, when they suggest a place for you and you refuse it." So they said, "Yes," and he said what he'd said before that he hoped to go with this friend so, I guess--I don't remember whether the dean wired and said could the two of them go and anyway it worked out the two of them came down to Frear, Prosser, Anderson and Marx. So it was through that one summer I met him.

M: Oh, that you stayed out of school. No?

W: What?

M: That wasn't the year you stayed out of school.

W: That was a summer.

M: Oh, I see.

W: One summer when I was home. I was in college then.

M: At Mills.

W: Yes, when he came down. I was in college when he came down to them and then one summer I met him and I went back to college again. I met him out at a big party that was given for other young lawyers by a Mrs. Tenney Peck, who had a place there at Black Point. Then I saw him there a number of times. At first I didn't think I cared to think about him. I mean, he was just a person. And then finally I got engaged to get married. He was from Iowa.

M: So then he decided to stay here after all.

W: Well, he liked it here all the time, yes; even before we were engaged he liked it. Um hm.

M: Did he stay with that law firm then?

W: No. He went outside to be on his own with somebody else and so it was Smith, Wild, Beebe and Cades. He went with Mr. Smith [on April 1, 1922]. Arthur [G.] Smith it was. Now it's Cades, Fleming, Wright and Schutte.

M: When did you build this house?

W: Which house?

M: This house [in Manoa on Alaula Way].

W: We didn't build it.

M: Oh, you didn't?

W: No. This is an old, old house that my parents gave me. (long pause) When I was married. Some say it was built--the neighbors; two neighbors. One neighbor said it was built in 1900; the other neighbor said it was built in 1902. So it is an old house; very old.

When one of my children got--we thought maybe he was going to have asthma. They said it was too wet and so forth so we bought a place out at the beach, Wailupe, and rented this place in the meantime and I still own some of the land out there at Wailupe but I sold most of it out there.

M: You eventually moved back here.

W: I moved back here, um hm.

M: How many children do you have?

W: I have three.

M: Could you give me their names, for the record?

W: One is Urban Earl Wild, Jr.

M: Ervin?

W: Urban. U-R-B-A-N.

M: Oh, yes.

W: He's the second child. The first one is Mary-Mae. M-A-R-Y hyphen M-A-E. . .Wild and she married Benjamin Howell Bond, Jr. He's of the Bonds of Kauai, an old family. Then Walter Frear Wild is the youngest. (long pause)

M: (hardly audible) There's something else about this place I wanted to ask you and I've forgotten it.

W: About this place?

M: Yeh. Oh, what were the circumstances of your parents giving it to you? They just--did they own it for a long time?

W: No, they knew that this place was to be sold soon so they just gave me the land and the house.

M: That was quite a wedding present. (chuckles)

W: Yes. Of course in those days it was not as expensive as it is now. I think it was a few thousand dollars. Now, I understand, if I sold it--it scares me--it might be $170,000.

M: Yeh, isn't that something? (long pause) How did your husband get the name Urban?

W: I don't know. I think, as I understood it, he said the family liked it. He was not Catholic. He was a Protestant but he did tell me, he said, "Well, you know, there's three popes called Urban." He said, "My family liked the name." I asked him. (chuckles)

M: Yes, it's very unusual name.

W: And yet, there is a man, I think--or was recently--he may still be on one of the local newspapers, who has the name Urban. [Urban M. Allen, associate editor, Honolulu Star-Bulletin.]

M: Oh really?

W: Um hm.

M: It's an odd name. (a dog barks and there is a long pause) I gathered from talking with Dr. [Steele F.] Stewart, your parents were very public-spirited type people, always involved in many worthy projects.

W: Yes.

M: Maybe, I thought, you could tell me something about that.

W: Well, she was one of the founders here, I think, of the A.A.U.W. [American Association of University Women] which is the college club. Then she--I'll have to check--you will have to check whether she was the president of the Y.W.C.A. I know for years she had a lot to do with it. And she was interested in music. The Morning Music Club it was called and it seemed to me she had her home for anybody who wanted to have a big group. Oh, she also was a regent at the University of Hawaii. And any time somebody wanted to come and use the house or things, it was always open.

M: My, you must have had a lot of traffic.

W: Well, when I say open, open to clubs; various clubs and certain things like that. She wrote. She has one book called The Coco Palm, music for children. You know that one?

M: No, I don't.

W: Ever seen it? Well, I can get that for you and I might show you some of the other things. My father also wrote a book, Mark Twain and Hawaii.

M: I heard about that. (noise, as if getting up from a chair, then the recorder is turned off and on again)

W: I even rode horseback early in the morning. I'd get up to saddle my horse in the early morning and I love Manoa and I used to ride up into the hills around here in Manoa. And also, as a girl, we used to get together--sometimes my father went with me; rarely. We went up to where the water-

fall drops. (recorder goes off momentarily mid-sentence) Now you're not allowed to get there because there're weeds and other things that you might take there but that was before the rule that you couldn't get right to the bottom. And they were lovely.

And then to the right of one of the waterfalls is what they call a bamboo forest and we had to be careful not to get lost in a bamboo forest because it was very, very thick in those days and you tried to look up and you couldn't see. You would hardly know that the sun was out, it was so dark.

M: This is back in Manoa.

W: Yes, up there. And they also, at one time, had--there's practically none left--sandalwood. Sandalwood trees. They thought that in the olden days they would have sandalwood and that would be a good product for the Islands but it never worked out.

M: Well, I guess they just came in and stripped everything out.

W: Well, they don't know whether it didn't grow so well or what. They even, of course, in the olden days too, that sisal was something they tried and for awhile--for two or three years anyway--sisal grew out, well, I guess in the general area of where Hickam [Field] is now. And then that was given up finally. That wasn't successful.

And of course we used to enjoy the train rides. (someone comes into the room and she speaks to him) I read about the start of that railroad that went from Honolulu out to Pearl City and out by Waianae and around Kaena Point. There's a lot of discussion on Kaena now. And then to Waialua and they had a nice big hotel there. People used to go there for meals. It was quite something to go and have a wonderful day and a wonderful meal and come back late; or it was a hotel, they had some rooms and they had some little cottages that you could rent, and that was quite the place to go and visit. It was quite the thing.

And speaking of Pearl City, on the way, my grandparents gave my mother a place at the Peninsula. And when I say the Peninsula, it was really a little peninsula that sticks out from Pearl City. It's across from Ford Island. It was on Pearl Harbor. In front of part of the land of her place was an old fish pond and we used to be able to get fish there--mullet.

And another thing that I used to do with some of the others that lived out there summertimes at their parents' homes, we used to go crabbing. We caught loads of crabs

and they were very good. Make crab salad and so forth and cook them. But I've never seen any crabs like those since. I guess maybe Pearl Harbor's just, you know, killed everything.

Oh, another thing. I had a boat and my mother had a boat and my grandparents had a place out there and they had boats; and my uncle had a boat and we used to go sailing. He'd take me sailing. Mine was a little rowboat and Mother's was a canoe, but Mother stopped with her canoe-riding after one of the--it wasn't a tuna fish, it was one of the fish that has a very sharp beak and cut the canoe.

M: Was it a swordfish, maybe, or something like that?

W: Yes, that's what it was, I think, a swordfish that stopped that. (Lynda chuckles) But there were several of us that had rowboats and different kind of boats and so I know that once or twice we went over to Ford Island and Ford Island now is military, you know. It wasn't then. It was sugar cane growing on the island and we used to sometimes say, "Oh, let's go as far as Ford Island," so we'd get over there and get on the--there's practically no beach there but there were little rocks and earth and so forth where we could get off. I think it was supposed to be that people shouldn't go and shouldn't cut any sugar cane. We didn't care about cutting sugar cane 'cause we could get sugar cane anywhere. Sometimes we grew it in our own place. But it was just fun to go to a certain destination. Certainly you couldn't do that nowadays.

M: No. Did your parents have a little place to stay; a cottage or something there?

W: They had a house. I have a picture of it, I think. (she gets up to get the picture) That's the house in here. Now the hills over here are all filled with houses and everything.

M: Yeh. Looks lovely. (referring now to a dog, "I didn't realize I was letting her out.")

W: He's kind of dirty and he needs brushing.

M: He's a curly dog. Is it all cocker spaniel?

W: A cocker spaniel, yes.

M: Yeh, you smell my dog, don't you? I wanted to ask you also about your mother's music. How did she get into music? Did she study and have formal training in it?

W: No, my grandmother was very artistic and she played beautifully. I think she was trained. Whether she trained my mother, I don't know. The year that we went to--I was in school--she did get someone to teach her harmony and some other things. I was eleven, I think, at that time. But I think some of her--I think The Coco Palm was done before 1911, most of it.

M: It's got one of these copyrights. . . (giggles)

W: Does it give the year? Well, the year of printing would be different than the year of their doing it maybe.

M: Yeh, but it's got it all in Roman numerals, which are not my strong. . . . She's got it copyrighted here by Mary Dillingham Frear and then it's copyrighted by the publishing company. That would be--M is a thousand? D, five hundred?

W: C is a hundred. M could be a million.

M: No, it's a thousand. So that'd be fifteen hundred plus three C's. That would be eighteen and the X would be ninety.

W: What?

M: Would be ninety. I'm trying to figure it out. 1898? Could it be that early?

W: Yeh.

M: 1898?

W: Um hm, because I remember out at Pearl Harbor, I was a little girl and she had a funny little old organ and pumped the organ with her foot and she was trying to work out these things and then, when she'd get what she thought was all right, she'd ask me to come and listen to see whether I liked it or not.

M: Hm. Did you learn music too?

W: No, I was interested in singing but it didn't work out. I went to school and then I got married.

M: Uh huh. Did you have an organ?

W: Well, the organ, no. I never played it very well, no. That organ is because my son, my youngest son, was here for awhile after the war and he wanted to try some music

and play the music, so I got the organ for him. Then he got married and he moved away and so the organ is still there and not being used. Rarely. And then, I have a bad finger so it wouldn't work very well anyway.

M: When you said grandparents, your mother's parents, that would be what Dillingham?

W: Benjamin. Benjamin Franklin Dillingham, the first. (Lynda laughs) Well, I don't know that the other Ben is a third or a second or what. I don't know. The one that had a railroad [Oahu Rail and Land Company], he was Ben, the first one, anyway.

M: Uh huh and those are your grandparents.

W: Um hm.

M: Did you ever see your father's parents?

W: Oh yes, sure. I stayed with them a lot.

M: Did they live here?

W: No, they lived in Oakland, California. He came across the country. They were Huguenots, their family was. They went to Holland. They left France and they went to Holland then they came over to New York and then from New York the grandfather went to California and he and his wife came across the country and in the little trailer he had that came across there was a chair that they used as a pew in the church. And that was in the wagon that came across.

M: My goodness.

W: They came out in about 1849. Either '48 or '49. It was around the time of the Gold Rush that he came out.

M: Um hm. So Frear is actually what, French?

W: It comes from the word frere, brother. F-R-E-R-E. And then it's been changed some in the States to F-R-E-E-R. There's a Freer Bowery. We're related, not too closely but related to those who have the Freer Bowery in Washington, D. C. But you may see the word Freer, F-R-E-E-R, oftener maybe than F-R-E-A-R.

M: Yes, uh huh. Your parents set up a trust, didn't they, too? I've come across their trust. My husband works for Hawaiian Trust Company and I think he mentioned it.

W: Yes. Yeh, eleemosynary trust.

M: Um hm. Did they live in that house--their house at Arcadia--until they died, your parents? I don't know when that happened.

W: Yes. My father died in 1948 and my mother died in--wait a minute. I get it mixed with my husband's. He died the year after. My husband died in 1952. I think she passed away in '51. Well, I'm not sure. We have to check that. I think she died three years after he did. I think she was in '51. Umm. Do you want to turn that off a minute?

M: Yeh. (recorder is turned off and Counter is at 252/SIDE 2)

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcribed and edited by Katherine B. Allen, 1979

Subject Index

THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

In May 1971, the Watumull Foundation initiated an Oral History Project.

The project was formally begun on June 24, 1971 when Katherine B. Allen was selected to interview kamaainas and longtime residents of Hawaii in order to preserve their experiences and knowledge. In July, Lynda Mair joined the staff as an interviewer.

During the next seventeen months, eighty-eight persons were interviewed. Most of these taped oral histories were transcribed by November 30, 1972.

Then the project was suspended indefinitely due to the retirement of the foundation's chairman, Ellen Jensen Watumull.

In February 1979, the project was reactivated and Miss Allen was recalled as director and editor.

Three sets of the final transcripts, typed on acid-free Permalife Bond paper, have been deposited respectively in the Archives of Hawaii, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii, and the Cooke Library at Punahou School.